



ROLE OF COMMUNITY IN SUSTAINING ANGANWADIS AND OTHER ECE CENTERS

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ABSTRACT

Education is motor for change that is why in December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly, through its Resolution 57/254, decided a decade of Education for sustainable development (2005-2014). It also designated UNESCO as the lead agency for the promotions of this decade. Education of children below the age of six years when they formally enter a school is of great importance when viewed from various angles. Specialists in the field of child development and child care are unanimous in acknowledging the foundational significance of this age. Not only with regard to health and nutrition, but also with regard to social, psychological, educational and physical development of the child. The most crucial years for learning are the preschool years when the children brain is growing and developing. These are the years when nurturing and appropriate stimulation will reap lifelong benefits as children develop self worth and host of new skills that will serve them for a life time. Children enter into preschool life with a significant background of learning experience within their family and outside home. The main objective of this paper is to assess the perception of parents towards significance of preschool education and evaluate their awareness about Anganwadis and other ECE centers and its role in preschool education. Community perception is an integral requirement of ICDS ; therefore parental awareness and perception towards the scheme need to be assessed and on the basis of this suggestions if required, can be forwarded to strengthen the parental participation comfort of the scheme. Descriptive research method is used to explore the perception and awareness of the community members towards Anganwadis and other ECE centers.

KEY WORDS: Community Perception, Awareness, ICDS.

INTRODUCTION:

“Education for sustainable development is not an option but priority.”

The first years of every human beings life are the most important for developing the attitudes and values that form the basis of their personalities. The structure of values and attitudes built in the early years are the strong and permanent roots for entire life. Early childhood spans the period from birth to six years. It is the period when the foundation of cognitive, physical, socio-emotional development, language and personality are laid. It is proven by neuroscience research that 90% brain growth takes place before the age of 5 years. A new born's brain is already 30% of the weight of the adult brain. In the first two years of a child's life, the brain grows to almost 70% of the adult size and within five years to about 90% (Johnson, 2005, Kinckneyer, etal, 2008).

Children below 6 years constitute 17% of the total population of India i.e. about country is very high. At the beginning of 1980s, 120 out of every 1000 newly born children were dying even before completing one year. Even after 50 years of independence, more than 40% of the Indian populations live below poverty line. Ignorance and illiteracy are still rampant among the rural people. Severe malnutrition on account of acute poverty which gives room for low-resistance and the consequential early childhood diseases are the main causes for this alarming situation.

Education of children prior to entry into the primary level; i.e. at the pre primary stage to the children in the age group of 3-6 years is denoted by terms over the years, the most acceptable and widely used term that has come to be is 'Early Childhood Education'. The terms have been changing over the years as the perspectives changed. It was CE (Child Education), ECE (Early Childhood Education,) then ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) and then ECD, where D stands for development with both care and education. ECD refers to holistic development of the young children up to 7/8 years of age, and to the variety of approaches that can be used singly or in combination, to meet the needs of children for development.

The latest in vogue is ECCD that denotes Early Childhood Care and Development. The 'Care' is used for children in the age group of 0-3 years while, ECE/Preschool education /pre primary education all refers to the activities /experience that are offered to children in the age group of 3-6year. In the essence early childhood education would encompass a set of goals, attitudes and practices that are aimed at the total all round development of the young child, inclusive of physical, cognitive, social and emotional dimensions.

Having realized the utmost urgency and importance of giving highest priority to develop human resources, the government of India found it most essential to evolve a national programme for the overall development of children. The result of this concern is the emergence of a national programme called Integrated Child Development Services scheme in the year 1975. ICDS address the health and nutrition needs of children under the age of six. It seeks to provide young children with an integrated package of services, including supplementary nutrition, health care and preschool education. For the first time in India, a special intervention

focus on school dropouts, girls in the age group of 11-18years. With a view to meeting their needs of self development, nutrition, health, education, literacy ,recreation and skill formation.

ICDS services are provided through a vast network of ICDS centers, better known as “Anganwadis”. ICDS scheme is an inter-sect oral programme, which provides an integrated package of services, seeks to directly reach out to mothers (pregnant and lactating); and children, below six years, especially from vulnerable and remote areas. To achieve the objectives, the scheme is designed to provide a comprehensive package of services for early childhood care and development. ICDS consists of six basic components for service delivery details of which are as following:

- Supplementary nutrition
- Non-formal pre-school education
- Immunization
- Health Check-up
- Referral services
- Nutrition and Health Education

Nutrition, Health and Education (NHED) is a key element of the work of the Anganwadis worker. But it is seen that in spite of many campaign many people are not aware about the services provided by Anganwadis. There is a little awareness about the ICDS scheme. Through this study the researcher has tried to know the awareness and perception of community members towards Anganwadis and the services provided by these. Until the people are not aware about the work or services provided by these, Government cannot achieve its goal of sustainable development.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The present study revolves around the focal issue awareness of the community regarding Anganwadis and other ECE centers and its role in preschool education. Descriptive research method is used to explore the perception and awareness of the community members towards Anganwadis and other ECE centers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To assess the awareness of community members towards the services as Immunization, health checkup and nutrition provided by Anganwadis.
- To assess the perception of parents towards significance of preschool education and evaluate their awareness about Anganwadis and other ECE centers and its role in preschool education.

THE RATIONALE OF HYPOTHESIS:

The major research premise of this study was that the community members are not aware about Preschool education and other services provided by Anganwadis center. Accordingly, the expectation in this study was that community members

/parents are aware about the preschool education and other services as immunization, health checkup and nutrition provided by Anganwadis centers. It was expected that community members/parents are aware about Preschool education and other services provided by the Anganwadis centre.

In order to verify the above expectations; the following assumptions had been formulated:

1. Community is aware about the services as immunization, health checkup and nutrition provided by Anganwadis
2. Community members/parents had positive perception towards the significance of preschool education provided by Anganwadis and other ECE centers.

METHODOLOGY:

The research method adopted for the study was descriptive survey design.

Sample of the Study: The present study is conducted in Bijnor district of Uttar Pradesh. In Bijnor district there are 11 blocks. This study is limited only to Najibabad block of Bijnor District. 5 village having Anganwadis centers have been selected for data collection. 10 parents from each village are interviewed to assess awareness of the people about Anganwadis centers. Purposive sampling method had been used to select the sample.

Tools Used in the Study: An interview schedule, constructed by the researcher had been used to collect data. This interview schedule consists of four sections. Each section had following items:

Description of tool

Sr. No.	Name of Section	No. of Item
1.	Health Activities	2
2.	Supplementary Nutrition	4
3.	Non Formal Preschool Education	5

Statistical Techniques: Percentage is used to measure the result.

Data Analysis:

Objective 1st: To assess the awareness of community members towards the services as immunization, health checkup and supplementary nutrition provided by Anganwadis centers.

Assumption: Community members are aware about the services provided by Anganwadis.

Table No. 1: Awareness about health Activities Carried on by Anganwadis Community

Sr. No.	Activities	Every Month		Once in Two Month		Once in Three Month	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Vaccination of 0 to 5 years children is done	9	18%	17	34%	24	48%
2.	Weight of children	3	06%	14	28%	33	66%

Table No.1 represents the awareness of the community members towards the health activities carried by Anganwadis centers. Through this the researcher has tried to assess that how much the community members are aware about services provided by the Anganwadis. It is found that 18% respondents remark that vaccination to 0 to 5 years children is done every month. 34% answers that it is done once in two month and 48% are of the view that it is done once in three months. 6% people respond that weight of children is measured every month, 28% remark that it is done once in a month and 66% inform that it is taken once in three month.

Table No. 2: Community Awareness about supplementary Nutrition Distributed by Anganwadis

Sr. No.	Distribution of Supplementary Nutrition	Every Month		Once in Two Month		Once in Three Month	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Distribution of supplementary Nutrition to pregnant lady	14	28%	17	34%	19	38%
2.	Distribution of Supplementary nutrition to lactating Mother	17	34%	21	42%	12	24%
3.	Distribution of Supplementary nutrition to adult girls	17	34%	24	48%	9	18%

Table No.2 represents how much the community members are aware about the distribution of supplementary nutrition provided by the Anganwadis. It is seen that 28% people know that supplementary nutrition to pregnant lady is provided to once in a month. 34% are of the view that it is provided once in two month and 38% remark that it is distributed once in three month. During the interview 34% people respond that supplementary nutrition to lactating mother is distributed every month. 42% remark that it is distributed once in two month and 24% respond that it is distributed once in three month. 34% people remark that supplementary nutrition to adult girls is provided every month. 48% people responds that supplementary to adult girls is provided to once in two months and 18 % respond that it is distributed once in three months.

Table No. 3: Distribution of Supplementary to Pre School Children

Sr. No.	Distribution of Supplementary Nutrition to preschool children	No.	%
1.	All working days in a week.	27	54%
2.	4 to 5 days in a week.	11	22%
3.	2 to 3 three days in a week	12	24%

Table No. 3 represents frequency of distribution of supplementary nutrition to the children who are enrolled in Anganwadis centers for pre primary education. 54% people remark that supplementary nutrition to the children who come to the Anganwadis center for pre primary education is distributed all working days. 22% people remark that it is distributed 4 to 5 days in a week not all working days and 24% are of the view that it is provided 2 to 3 days in a week.

Objective 2: To assess the perception of parents towards significance of pre-school education and evaluate their awareness about role of Anganwadis in pre-school education.

Assumption 2: Community members/parents had positive perception towards the significance of preschool education provided by Anganwadis and other ECE centers.

Table No. 4: Perception of community members towards Preprimary Education

Sr. No.	Different Items	No.	%
1.	Preschool education is:		
	a. Education provided to 3 to 4 years Children	24	48%
	b. To get ready children for school education	17	34%
	c. Not respond	9	18%
2.	Anganwadis are providing preprimary education.	28	56%
3.	You have enrolled your children in Anganwadis for preprimary education.	14	28%
4.	You are satisfied with the preprimary education provided by the Anganwadis in your village.	18	36%
5.	If you don't want to enroll your child in Anganwadis its reason is:		
	a. Lack of information	8	16%
	b. Lack of Interest of Anganwadis worker in teaching.	27	54%
	c. Lack of facilities on Anganwadis centers.	15	30%

Table No. 4 represents the perception and awareness of the community members towards the Anganwadis and its role in pre primary education. On being asked what is preprimary education 24% people remark that education provided to 3 to 4 year's children is pre primary education. 34 % replied that it to get ready children for school education and 18% respondents remain silent on this question. 56% people respond that Anganwadis are providing pre primary education. Only 28% people remark that they have enrolled their children to Anganwadis centre. Only 36% people are satisfied with the education provided by Anganwadis centre.

On being asked why don't you want to enroll your children to Anganwadis for pre Primary education, 16% people due to lack of information don't have enroll their child in Anganwadis centers. 54% people replied that Anganwadis Worker don't have interest in teaching to the children so they don't have enrolled their children to these centers. 30% replied that Anganwadis centers don't have basic facilities so they don't want to enroll their children in Anganwadis centers.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION:

The main findings of this study have been presented here as:

- It is found that most of the community members do not have proper information about the services provided by the Anganwadis centers.
- Vaccination and weight of 0 to 5 years children is done every month but

48% parents inform that it is done once in three month. They don't have actual information about the services of Anganwadis.

- Findings reveal that about the distribution of supplementary nutrition people are aware and 54% parents responds that it is distributes every month.
- It is also find that only 56% people respond that Anganwadis are providing primary education.
- It is also find that only 28% people have enrolled their children in Anganwadis for pre primary education.
- Here it is to be noted that only 36% people are satisfied with education provided by Anganwadis in the villages.
- 54% people remark that due to Anganwadis workers lack of interest in teaching to the children they don't have enrolled their child to the Anganwadis for Pre primary education.

CONCLUSION:

Early childhood spans the period from birth to six years. It is the period when the foundation of cognitive, physical, socio emotional development, language and personality are laid. Thus, Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) is a key intervention provide opportunities for a healthy, productive and satisfying life by enabling the child to develop to her optional potential. The benefits of the ECCE programme don't only accrue to the child enrolled, but to the society as a whole. So there as a great need to make people aware about the services provided by ECCE. During this study it is found that in spite of government a lot of efforts people are not aware about the ECCE services, so there is a need of campaign about the ECCE so that goal of sustainable development can be achieved.

SUGGESTIONS:

Following suggestions can be made based on understanding derived from the findings of the study, observation made in the field and several informal discussions held with the community members and parents during the data collection.

- During the study it is found that most of the parents do not have proper information about the services by Anganwadis, so there is need of campaign regarding services provided by Anganwadis.
- Along with pre primary education it is also important for sustainable development of the children, only then we can achieve the goal of Agenda 2030.
- There is also a great need to uplift the level of Anganwadis centers. It is seen that most of the Anganwadis centers don't have basic infrastructure that is very necessary for pre primary education.
- Most of the Anganwadis centers don't have their own building. These centers are running in primary schools or at any rented room in a village. So there is a great need to pay attention of government authorities on this issue.
- Along with community awareness there is also a great need of proper monitoring of Anganwadis centers by the authorities.

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